

These notes are for:

- Secondary
- Years 10 - 12
- 15+ years

Key Learning Areas:

- English
- ICT

Example of:

- Print Text
- Futuristic Society
- Young Adult Fiction
- Documents

Experience of:

- Science & Technology
- Internet/ICT
- Satire
- Dystopia
- Consumerism
- Colloquial/Slang Language
- Media/Marketing

Values addressed:

- Care & Compassion
- Freedom
- Respect
- Honesty & Trust

*Notes may be downloaded and printed for regular classroom use only.

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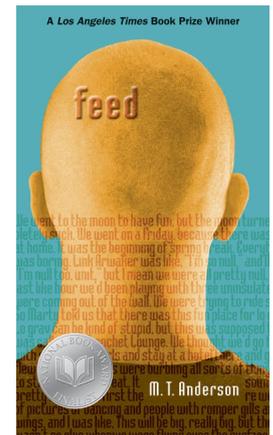
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"I have never read a novel that compares to this: *Feed* is a mindboggling work of the imagination, meg inventive, meg amusing, and meg ominous."
 – Sonya Hartnett, author of "Sleeping Dogs" and "Thursday's Child" – *The Guardian*

Feed

Feed (pbk)

By M.T. Anderson
 ISBN: 9780763622596
 ARRP: \$16.95
 NZRRP: \$19.99
 No. of Pages: 320
 June 2003



Outline

Feed is a satirical novel set in an imagined future when the internet and advertising banners are fed directly into people's heads via computer chip.

Titus is a teenage protagonist whose ability to read, write, and even think for himself has been almost completely obliterated by the "feed." He is partying on the moon during spring break when he meets Violet, a bright, independent-minded girl who cares about what's happening to the world and challenges everything Titus and his friends holds dear.

M. T. Anderson's skillful use of satire invites readers to recognize elements of the present-day world within the novel's sci-fi setting. Besides being a smart, savage satire, *Feed* is also a poignant story about human connection and loss that leaves an unforgettable emotional impact.

Author Information – M.T. Anderson

M.T. Anderson is an author of books for children and young adults. His picture books include, *Handel Who Knew What He Liked*, *The Serpent Came to Gloucester* and *Me, All Alone, at the End of the World*. His young adult books include, *Thirsty*, *Burger Wuss* and *The Astonishing Life of Octavian Nothing, Traitor to the Nation. Volume 1: The Pox Party* and *Volume II: Kingdom of the Waves* released in February 2009.

Anderson's books are highly acclaimed and he has won several awards including, *The Michael L. Printz Honor Book* for literary excellence in young adult literature 2007, and the *National Book Award for Young People*, for *The Astonishing Life of Octavian Nothing, Volume 1: The Pox Party*. *Feed* was named a 2002 *Los Angeles Times Book Prize Winner*, a 2003 *Boston Globe-Horn Book Award Honor Book*, and a finalist for the 2002 *National Book Award*. M.T. Anderson lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts, US.

How to use these notes

These notes provide a variety of discussion questions that can be used to engage students with the novel *Feed*. These activities may appeal to a broad age range, please select accordingly.

Feed For Thought – Questions to Discuss

1. Both the “chat” and “bannering” functions of the feed in *Feed* have their prototypes in modern internet technology. What might the author be trying to get across by having these functions occur directly within people’s brains?
2. What would be the benefits and drawbacks of that kind of system?
3. Is there anything like the “lesions” in today’s culture?
4. Why do you think the author chose the names he did – Titus, Link, Violet and so on – for his characters? What might their names say about the world they live in?
5. Surrounding the story of Titus and his friends are hints of various international events. Why doesn’t Titus seem to be aware of them?
6. Do Titus’s actions (and non-actions) in his relationship with Violet strike you as realistic? How do you think you would act if you were in his place?
7. In what way does Titus’s concept of love differ from Violet’s?
8. In a consumerist society, once things have outlived their usefulness, they tend to be discarded. How might this attitude affect the way people interact with one another? How might it affect the way they think of the past?
9. Over the course of the book, Violet accuses many people of many things. But are there times when you felt that she, herself, was in the wrong?
10. Violet lists all the things she wants to do before she dies. Do you share any items on the list? What can we learn about her from her list? And what could someone learn about you from YOUR list?
11. How does Violet benefit from resisting the feed? What price does she pay?
12. The author dedicates the book “to those who resist the feed.” What does he mean by this? What is “the feed,” in a real-life context, and how can it be resisted? What are the benefits and drawbacks of doing so? In what ways do you “resist the feed”?
13. A UTOPIAN novel depicts the perfect world order. A DYSTOPIAN novel is the opposite – it depicts a future world in which everything has gone wrong (such as George Orwell’s *1984*, or Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World* – or movies like the *Mad Max* series). The third section of *Feed* is entitled “Utopia.” Why might that be? Is this novel utopian or dystopian?
14. Is the scenario depicted in *Feed* the way you see our world going? If you were to write a dystopian novel, what would be the major problem with the future, based on what you see around you now?
15. What do you think could be done to stop our world from becoming like the world in *Feed*? Would you WANT to stop the world from becoming that way?

Feed For Thought – Questions to Discuss

Coming to Terms

The author of *Feed* has invented a “future speak” for his characters that includes words like NULL, MEG, YOUCH, MAL, BRAG, and UNIT. But he never defines these terms. How are you able to figure out their meaning?

Try writing a dialogue between two characters from the future that includes your own made-up words. Then let someone else read what you’ve written and see if they can guess what your invented terms mean.

The Secret of the Sestina

At the end of the chapter “Our Duty to the Party,” Violet has a seizure during which she lashes out verbally at the partygoers around her (page 160). Among other things, she accuses them of talking in a “sestina.”

1. Look up the meaning of the word SESTINA. You may want to check out some books or explore some Internet sites that explain more thoroughly what this word means. Copy or print out an example.
2. Now flip back to page 158 in *Feed*, and reread from there to the end of the chapter. How does the author illustrate (in part) what a sestina is through his dialogue? Why do you think the author chose to use this form?

On Writing *Feed*

Writing the celebrated satire *Feed*, says M. T. Anderson, was a process that demanded a fair share of field research. “I read a huge number of magazines like *Seventeen* and *Stuff*,” he confesses. “I listened to cell phone conversations in malls. Where else could you get lines like ‘Dude, I think the truffle is totally undervalued?’”

How important is research when writing a story? Why was it important to portray teenagers accurately in *Feed*? As a task, choose a magazine or newspaper article of particular interest. Take a phrase or small sentence from your resource and write a brief dialogue based around this.

Praise for *Feed*

National Book Award Finalist
Los Angeles Times Book Prize Winner
New York Times Book Review Notable Book of the Year
Book Sense 76 Top Ten Pick
Boston Globe – Horn Book Honor Winner
American Library Association Best Book for Young Adults
Chicago Public Library Best Book
Horn Book Fanfare Selection
Publishers Weekly Best Children’s Book of the Year
Publishers Weekly “Cuffie” Award Winner: Favorite Novel of the Year and Best Opening Line
Booklist Editors’ Choice
Bulletin of the Center for Children’s Books
Blue Ribbon Winner
Junior Library Guild Selection